



# **Information Technology Services**

**2008  
Annual  
Report**

## Table of Contents

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Director's Message         | page 1   |
| Mission & Core Values      | page 2   |
| Public Safety Projects     | page 3   |
| General Service Projects   | page 4,5 |
| BTIP                       | page 5   |
| Challenges                 | page 6   |
| Improvements               | page 6   |
| Awards                     | page 7   |
| Cost Savings Initiatives   | page 8   |
| By the Numbers             | page 8   |
| Organizational Development | page 9   |
| Community Involvement      | page 9   |

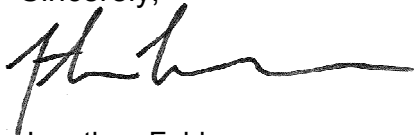
## Back to Basics

2008 was a year of hard work for the City of Asheville's IT Services department. IT staff, and the citizens and line departments that benefit, all have a right to be proud of the business technology accomplishments that have taken place in this city. Indeed, IT Services and city management have such a significant track record of accomplishment that City Council chose to approve a major business technology undertaking at the end of 2008 – the Business Technology Improvement Project (BTIP). They did so knowing that the dollars invested would be shepherded into real business improvement rather than some esoteric technology that only serves the technical elite.

As I write this, we are staring at an uncertain 2009. Some of the economic indicators are well known, but the long-term consequences to the country are yet to be determined. But I can tell you this: IT Services has, over the last few years, geared up to be a lean, mean department that is highly focused on using what resources we have in the wisest manner. The esprit de corps of the department, with a concentration on continuous stepwise improvement and helpful customer service, is an atmosphere where the notion of "doing whatever it takes" will be welcome.

2009 will pose its challenges. But citizens and line departments can expect that IT Services will go back to basics. We'll be flexible to conditions, but we'll also continue to prioritize our core values of customer service, professional expertise, fiscal & operational stewardship, and quality of life for our employees and those we serve. We may change what we do, and we may change how we deliver services, but our pledge to all of our customers is that we will continue to concentrate on the basics of service and put our best foot forward, no matter what the economic conditions are.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Feldman  
Director,  
Information Technology  
Services



## **Mission**

Information Technology Services strives to provide excellent customer services by providing quality technical deliverables with a high level of professionalism and responsiveness.

We adhere to principles of technical and fiscal stewardship with an end goal of a high quality of life for employees and citizens.

## **Core Values**

### **Customer Service**

We will provide customer service in a responsive and timely manner.

### **Professionalism**

We will interact courteously, ethically, and with commitment to continuous improvement.

### **Stewardship**

We will earn trust by practicing fiscally responsible management that ensures system integrity and availability.

### **Expertise**

We will be advocates for our customers by developing and maintaining competence and knowledge.

### **Quality of Life**

We will recognize the importance of balancing the relationship between quality of work and quality of life.

## Public Safety Projects

**Public Safety Radio Ordinance:** Working with the Planning & Development department, IT Services identified best practices for tall building requirements. The result: an ordinance that asks tall building developers to take public safety communications into account while planning the structure. This is significantly less expensive than retrofitting a building (somewhat like building a building that is “cable ready” vs. retrofitting.) The benefit: better communication for our public safety officers while responding to a building event, which means **safer buildings, safer occupants, and safer officers**. While this task was low profile within the department, the coordination and effort with the Planning Department will have a long lasting and positive impact on the City and our Public Safety Agencies for years to come.

**AVL updates:** AVL (Automated Vehicle Locator) is a system that not only answers the question, “Car 54, where are you?”, but also provides for more efficient dispatch of vehicles to respond to citizen needs. Updates were planned and executed to keep this system running effectively.

**mapAsheville – Crime Mapper:** In conjunction with Asheville Police Department and the public, staff developed, and released mapAsheville - Crime Mapper. This program provides the public with greater awareness of, and information about, criminal activity within the City of Asheville. Visit us at [www.ashevillenc.gov/mapasheville](http://www.ashevillenc.gov/mapasheville). Additionally Staff worked with the Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office, Buncombe County GIS, and Criminal Justice Information Systems to get Sherriff’s Data into the Crime Mapper.

**CALEA Accreditation Assistance:** This was a big year for the Police Dept with a full CALEA re-accreditation process to go through. Several members of the IT Services team participated in assisting APD prepare for what was a very successful process by performing a complete security audit and inventory of APD equipment.



**IA Pro (Early Warning System for APD):** Implemented an Officer/Supervisor automated early warning system for the Asheville Police Dept. This system helps APD automate its Internal Affairs program, and in the long run, provides better tools for proactive management.

**CodeRED Implementation and rollout:** In May of 2008, Asheville Fire and Rescue and IT Services rolled a new Citizen Emergency Notification System out to the public. The new system is a web-hosted application that allows citizens to sign-up to receive alerts and notifications on their home, work and cellular phones. The system has the ability to notify the entire city of urgent information in less than 1 hour. To date, this system has been used to notify the public of missing persons, silver alerts, training exercises being conducted in their area, and most recently water outages. Public Safety continues to expand the use of the system and IT Services has incorporated pre-defined areas such as in flood zones that allow emergency personnel to notify folks living in a floodplain at a moment’s notice. We’ve also started to collect email and text addresses to add functionality of notifying citizens with email alerts as well as adding key/critical city staff contact information into CodeRED calling lists to use in the event of emergency recall and notification to staff members.

## General Service Projects



**Parks & Rec system improvements:** Due to an implementation of new software at the City's Golf Course Snack shop, customers now have the convenience of paying via credit and debit cards. By offering this service to customers, they are saving valuable time on and off the course which helps in maintaining tee time schedules. In addition, software upgrades were made to offer the Food Lion Skatepark the use of a Quick Entry Point-of-Sale system. Stephens-Lee gained the use of a Pass Management system. Each of these improvements will aid in the upcoming 2009 upgrade of the Parks and Recreation software, which in turn, will help the department remain PCI compliant.

### **Web Reporting Accountability Project:**

Technical and Support Services worked together to build a better and more customer friendly methodology of web usage blocking & reporting. Worked with City Management to establish a more flexible and more accountable method of reporting usage within a department. During a WLOS news story in December, it was apparent that the City of Asheville distributes accountability reports to managers on a regular basis, while other organizations in the region do not, giving the City a higher level of professional accountability.

**Presidential Candidates:** IT Services staff provided setup, mapping support, and assistance to Presidential candidates' teams, media and our own Public Safety Agencies for multiple special events. In particular, ITS set up technology used at rallies for Presidential candidates Hillary Clinton, Barak Obama; and for Vice Presidential candidate, Sarah Palin.

**Continuous improvement: infrastructure** IT Services stays committed to keeping systems up to date, keeping technical capabilities maximized for our users and avoiding delays in projects requiring updates. The following upgrades were successfully accomplished during 2008: voice over IP phone system, Call Center system, voicemail system, and 800Mhz radio systems. We also moved forward with necessary changes in our Active Directory and storage area network. One theme during these updates was to remove levels of complexity in our systems to make them reliable and sustainable.

**Systems Automation:** The IT Services budget for 2008 included funds for systems automation and management. After competitive pricing, staff selected the KBOX systems management tool. The software almost entirely automates very cumbersome processes such as patching by allowing different treatment for groups such as Laptop Users or Public Safety Mobiles. KBOX also allows us to patch computers at night using WOL (Wake-On-Lan) technology. WOL has the ability to remotely power on computers when updates are needed. This allows IT Services to roll out updates to users with little or no impact to productivity while continuously monitoring the status of patches.

### **Backup and Recovery improvements.**

System processes have been simplified by the purchase and setup of a more automated backup server that can hold up to 16 terabytes of disk to disk storage and a tape autoloader. Instead of manually picking up and returning tapes daily, this process is reduced to once a week. IT Services, like most responsible IT departments, has off-site backups. The new system reduces staff time driving to remote locations daily in order to change tapes out. This also allows us to remove disparate tape systems, to standardize on one tape format and to reduce the complexity of the backup process.

**Benchmarking study:** IT Services, committed to visibility and transparency in government, embarked on an IT resource comparison across the state. We continue to monitor IT resources used in other local governments to see how the City of Asheville's IT Department stacks up.



## General Service Projects

**Development Services Center:** Staff continued support on improvements in streamlining the Development Services Center. Specifically, staff worked to train Engineering, Water and Planning functions to integrate into the permitting system process. Staff also automated Planning's cash receipts.

**Physical Security Systems:** Several key staff completed a comprehensive assessment and report of Physical Security systems as the first steps towards safer city facilities city-wide. Much progress has been made in installing cameras and additional security as requested by city departments. To date, City Hall facility security enhancements include installation of "panic buttons" at recreation centers, card readers and cameras in the City Hall garage, and installation of a camera system at recreation centers to supplement security efforts.

**Bele Chere:** IT worked with City staff to provide new services at Bele Chere with remote/wireless ticketing for concerts, a mobile surveillance system, and wireless electronic customer surveys strategically placed throughout the event.



Larry Bopp rolling out laptops

## BTIP: Business Technology Improvement Project

Asheville City Council recently re-affirmed its commitment to invest \$2,000,000 into a project called the Business Technology Improvement Project (BTIP). It is a project that will make the City of Asheville a more efficient and automated organization through the use of city-wide software (often called "enterprise" software because it helps the organization act as one coordinated unit rather than in departmental silos).

One of the focus areas of this process is to dramatically reduce the number of paper forms used in the City organization. The cost to produce and process a form drops from about \$5 per form to \$1.65 per form by going from paper to electronic forms, according to Planning magazine.

Accordingly, this project will provide modern systems for basic business areas such as human resources processing, budget, purchasing, our general ledger and accounting system, contract management, utility billing, bank reconciliation, inventory management, business license permitting, and over a dozen more.

Many of these functions, like human resources, will go from an intensively paper-based process to an electronic process. This will be cost-effective, and will also introduce other efficiencies such as improved response time.

During 2008, city staff had a commitment to a "ready, aim, fire" approach to this project, and spent significant time assessing the organization and putting together a request for proposal for our base software system. Line departments identified "process owners" that took ownership of various business functions. These process owners were instrumental in creating the *right* specifications for the software. After due diligence activities such as product demos, reference checking, and a site visit, software was selected and negotiations were successfully concluded.

## Challenges

**New contracting/approval process.** A more comprehensive and accountable contracting process was rolled out city-wide in 2008. The large number of small contracts that IT Services typically engages became a challenge to navigate because of the increased amount of information required. We looked at this challenge as an opportunity to streamline our administrative practices and policies. By developing timelines, an easy to use checklist and new approval method we reduced the impact on staff members at all levels.

In the fall of 2008, **supporting mobile laptops** for Asheville Police and Fire Departments with respect to patching and maintenance was a challenge for IT Staff. These users have a varied work schedule and are sometimes difficult to locate which made scheduling updates somewhat tricky. Staff worked late nights- crawling around in trucks and cars hooking up cords and reprogramming mobile laptops for the entire fleet. The end result was an accurate update of all mobiles that now allows us to send out important patches, tracking, and updates.

The **Gas shortage** and price spikes was a sudden challenge to staff in 2008 by causing a major shift in priorities as we rushed to set up close to 100 users with the ability to work from home.

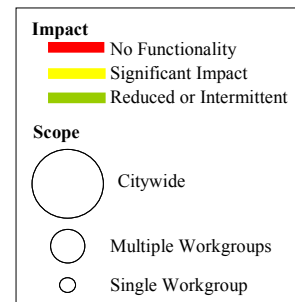
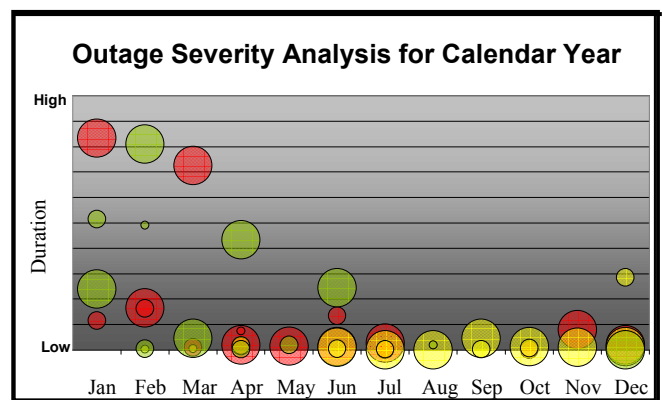
## Improvements and Awards

IT Services has created a **standard operating procedure** for the procurement and set up of technology items for our users. This procedure incorporates lead times for the procurement and set up of technology for staff. This enables staff to better balance work order load and ensures that customer expectations can be met with regards to technology needs.

**Human capital and resource availability** were major challenges to IT Services in 2008. Several steps were taken to address these challenges, including some aspects of project portfolio management: a 'force rank' system for projects, and including IT capacity request in departmental budget requests.

Staff also created a frequently-needed **commodities list**. This list was designed to help individual departments procure technology-related equipment such as monitors, printers, computer accessories and more. It is intended to be an easy to use basic ordering guide with an index, descriptions and links to items. The commodities list is updated quarterly to ensure that it is up-to-date.

**Outage Improvements.** In late 2007, our department started to collect metrics on all down-time – not just network or system downtime, but anything that even slightly impacted workgroups. By providing this visibility, our department could actually see the impact that downtime was placing on our customer base. By the end of 2008 we had cut outage time by 98 percent. Reducing outages has manifested itself in a more reliable phone system and Maximo system. Outage reporting is an ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) best practice that has resulted in increased communication between the three divisions of IT Services, which has also resulted in a better understanding of roles and responsibilities during change planning & management.

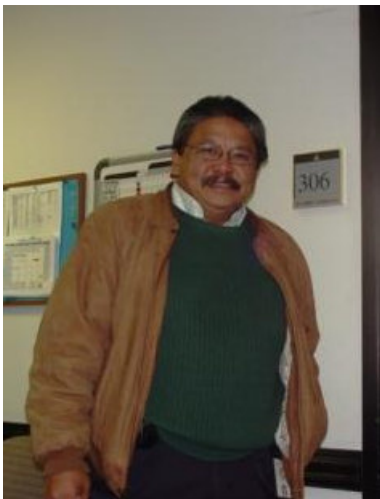




## Improvements and Awards

### Priority Places Award: The IEDC

(International Economic Development Council) presented an award to the City of Asheville at IEDC's Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia for the new mapAsheville application, **Priority Places**. Competing in the category of New Media by organizations serving areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000, Asheville was a clear standout with *Priority Places Asheville*. Developed in cooperation with the Office of Economic Development, this web based application provides dynamic analysis of factors considered in economic development projects and provides market profile and demographic reporting capabilities in order to facilitate more informed decision making. It also provides tapestry reports of demographic information on the selected places. The application is part of the mapAsheville suite of GIS-based tools designed to provide information about the City. Priority Places has the potential to act as an easy tool for businesses looking to relocate to Asheville, therefore drawing more business to the Asheville area and contributing to Asheville's economic growth.



Gilbert Domingo

## The Bottom Line: Money Saving Initiatives

2008 presented, and 2009 continues to present fiscal challenges for the City. ITS is working to be part of the solution by collaborating with departments in reducing budget costs associated with technology, and using technology to reduce departmental costs. Examples include canceling maintenance for equipment that is no longer needed by departments, recommendations for software needs that are cheaper than brand named products, re-engineering how IT Services approaches a given technical need, and so on. Specific examples include:

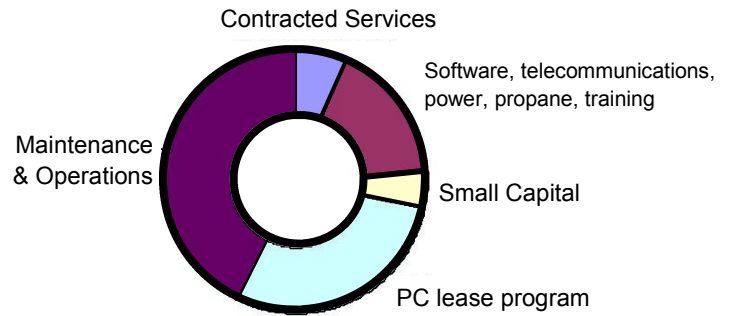
|  |            |
|--|------------|
| \$275,000 in general contract negotiations related to the BTIP project and a water system project.   | \$275,000— |
| Saved \$41,000 on computer lease program by aggressively pursuing more vendors for competition.  | \$41,000—  |
| Replacement of our anti-spam server which led to a cost savings of \$3,000 per year in hardware and maintenance costs. This had two benefits; users did not have to wait for IT to release spam: and, through the reduction in work orders, IT Staff could focus on higher value activities.   | \$3,000—   |
| Re-engineered long distance to Voice over IP system, conservative estimates at \$5,000 annually.   | \$5,000—   |
| Worked with departments and budget office to reduce cellular phone line items by \$59,821 in FY09  | \$59,821—  |
| GIS/Application Services worked with Assistant City Manager, Public Works, & Budget to perform address data reconciliation and correction on in-city vs. out-of-city utility franchise fee disbursements. Team netted \$300,000 of revenue, with approximately \$100,000 of ongoing revenue and avoided a 50% consultant fee by doing work in-house. | \$150,000— |
| Worked with Buncombe County to identify fiber optic savings for consolidated PSAP by utilizing city contract. Contract of \$171,235 was approximately 1/3 of market pricing. Resultant savings of approximately 340,000.   | \$340,000— |

**Cost Savings of: \$873,821**

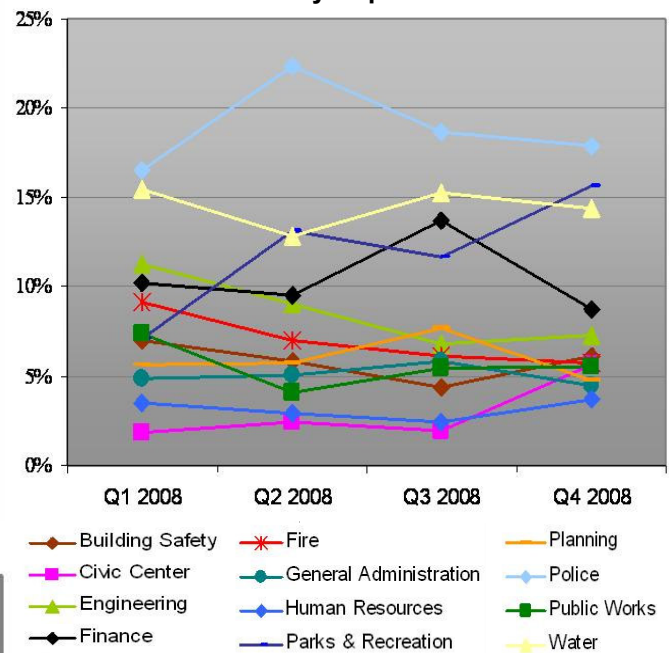
## By the Numbers:

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Number of IT Employees:                                   | 17      |
| Administration  | 2       |
| Support Services  | 5       |
| Technical Services  | 6       |
| GIS & Application Services                                | 4       |
| Average Work Orders Completed Monthly                     | 887     |
| ITS Budget as a percentage of the City's Operating Funds  | 1.70%   |
| Number of printers managed                                | 350     |
| Network Servers Managed                                   | 70      |
| Number of cell phones, PDAs, and air cards managed by ITS | 606     |
| Number of PCs Managed                                     | 775     |
| Radios managed by ITS                                     | 1,000   |
| Number of Cisco Phones                                    | 990     |
| Average number of SPAM blocked weekly                     | 74,910  |
| Average number of emails checked for viruses weekly       | 410,595 |

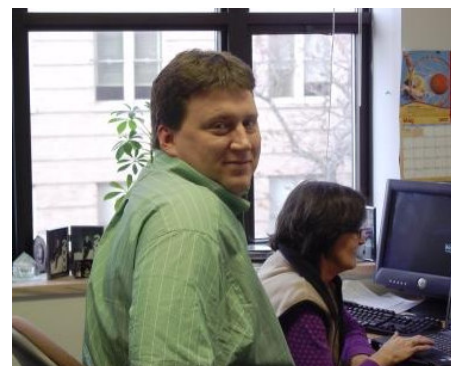
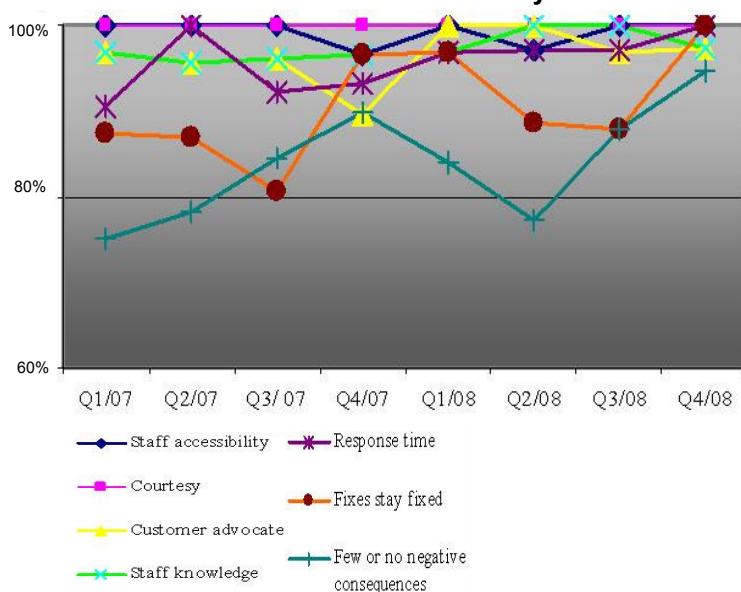
## IT Services Expenditures by Type– FY 09



## IT Services Utilization– Percentage of all Work Orders by Department



## Two Year Quarterly Trend- “Good or Excellent” Customer Service Survey



Mike Buckner was our premier AB Tech Intern in 2008

## Organizational Development

**Tim Reimers** brings years of knowledge to our staff from Asheville City Schools System where he worked as their Cisco project manager and administrator. He joined the Technical Services staff in early 2008 as a Systems Analyst II. Operating largely behind the scenes; Tim has been instrumental in improving the security of the City's infrastructure, specifically in regards to switches and firewalls. Welcome and thanks, Tim, for all of your hard work.

**Jason Williams** (aka "The Blur") joined our staff in the summer of 2008. He was a Customer Service Representative for the City of Asheville for over 3 years before coming to work for the Support Services Division as a help desk specialist. Jason has a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and energy, consistently closing a high number of work orders and assisting with high level projects. Jason continues to be a huge asset to our department. Welcome Jason!

**Mike Buckner** was our premier AB Tech intern of 2008. A committed student and a fast learner, Mike was able to jump into the wild and crazy world of Support Services and help roll those computers out to users. We are pleased to report that his excellent customer service skills and computer knowledge enabled him to land a job at a local healthcare system where he now works as a Support Specialist in the IT department. IT services is proud to contribute to growing local technology assets, and we know that Mike will do well in Western North Carolina!

**Keevon Baten** came to us through the City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy as a rising sophomore at Asheville High in the SILSA (School of Inquiry and Life Sciences at Asheville) program. With an impressive 4.15 GPA, he is unsure of a future career field, but is already an entrepreneur, buying items at local garage sales and reselling them for profit on eBay. Keevon was a great summer addition to IT Services as an enthusiastic and proficient learner, helping staff with CAELA audits for APD and assisting in the PC lease program.

## Community Involvement

Gilbert Domingo, our Senior Systems Analyst, helped to set up a remote site for tax preparation at the Senior Opportunity Center. In 2008 they processed 2408 tax returns. Thanks Gilbert!

Debbie Messer, our Support Specialist, has been serving food at local food kitchens for years now with her family and friends. She was recently featured in the Asheville Citizen Times serving soup with a smile. Thank you for your service to our community.

Stephanie Osborne & Stacey Witkowski of ITS joined forces with Planning's Rita Baidas to form a triathlon team for the YWCA's Asheville Triathlon event in May. They placed third in their division.

Jonathan Feldman teamed up with Roderick Simmons, Tony McDowell, and Jeff Richardson to run the Chamber Challenge Race in June. Their team, Managed Savers, finished in the top half of their group.

Steve Frey took the helm of our United Way fund drive, and helped us to raise well over \$4000 for social services in our community. Thanks Steve!

## Professional Development

Jason Mann was a speaker at Asheville Buncombe Tech's GIS Day in October 2008.

Stacey Witkowski received her ITIL Certification in June, 2008.

Gary Glass completed training in the Spring of 2008 for Implementing a Microsoft SQL server database and also completed training in December on Maintaining a Microsoft SQL server database.

Jonathan Feldman led a training session for GMIS (nationwide government managed information services user group) on the topic of IT performance metrics.

Wanda Burgess received her Numara Track-IT! 8.5 Administrator Certification in December, 2008

Dave Michelson received his GIS Professional (GISP) certification.